Catalogue of an Exhibition of

Etchings

by

Rembrandt

With an Introduction by
David Keppel

Frederick Keppel & Company
16 East Fifty-Seventh Street
New York

November 11 to November 29, 1924

Parke-Bernet 1977 3.23

Catalogue of an Exhibition of

Etchings

by

Rembrandt

With an Introduction by
David Keppel

Frederick Keppel & Company
16 East Fifty-Seventh Street
New York

November 11 to November 29, 1924

FORTUNATELY for us Rembrandt was never taught that the subject has no bearing on the value of a work of art. On the contrary he immersed himself in his subject and forgot all else to bring out its human and spiritual significance. This simple and old fashioned method seems somehow to ring very true after one has been wandering in those elevated but somewhat sterile regions where no quality is admitted except the quality of pure design.

How flexible and sensitive an instrument his genius was in depicting scenes from the life of Christ may be realized by comparing two groups of prints which are included in the present exhibition. For the most part these prints are very modest in size and simple in treatment.

The first group has to do with the earliest days of Christ's life on earth. The rough simple figures are quite devoid of beauty in the usual sense but instead have a touching human quality of which Rembrandt alone had the secret. They have also a certain childlike quality and a joyousness which is associated in our minds with Christmas. In this group I should include *The Nativity* and the *Adoration of the Shepherds*, the *Flight into Egypt*, *a Night Piece* and the *Holy Family Crossing a Rill* and also both versions of the *Rest on the Flight into Egypt.*

As the first group has the simplicity and sweetness appropriate to childhood,

so the second group has the sublimity appropriate to Christ's Passion and supernatural appearances. The style still seems simple and almost naive, but how soaked with tragedy the *Agony in the Garden*, how nobly solemn the *Descent from the Cross by Torchlight*, how full of sorrow *Christ Carried to the Tomb*. Again there is a subtle change to the miraculous appearance of *Christ at Emmaus* and *The Incredulity of St. Thomas*.

DAVID KEPPEL

November, 1924

CATALOGUE

1 **Rembrandt à Trois Moustaches** B. 2

Assumed date 1632–4. From the Hilgrove Coxe collection.

2 **Rembrandt Wearing a Scarf** B. 17

Dated 1633. Third state of five. Very fine impression.

3 **Rembrandt and Saskia** B. 19

Dated, 1636. Second state of three. From the Harford, Esdaile and Morrison collection.

4 **Rembrandt in an Oval, With Aigrette** B. 23

Dated 1634. Very fine impression, of the third state of four. From the Herman Webber collection.

5 **Rembrandt in Fur Cap and Light Dress** B. 24

Dated 1630. Fourth state of five.

"Spirited work with much more scientific modeling. Cap, dress, and dark passages of hair due to a second biting over a paler etching."

C. J. Holmes. *Notes on the Art of Rembrandt.*

6 **Rembrandt Dismissing Hager** B. 30

Dated 1637. Beautiful impression of the only state.

"This is one of the most perfectly delicate of all Rembrandt's etchings."

P. G. Hamerton.

7 **Abraham's Sacrifice** B. 35

Dated 1655. Brilliant impression, from the Morant collection.

"By its grandeur and originality of invention and composition it may well take rank as one of Rembrandt's finest plates. . . . Independently of its very fine composition, and the magnificent style in the drawing of Abraham and the Angel, this plate may be easily recommended as a fine example of the free etched line which is everywhere perfectly frank and full of vital energy."

P. G. Hamerton, *Rembrandt.*

8 **David and Goliath** B. 36

Dated 1655. Third state of four.

9 **The Image Seen by Nebuchadnezzar** B. 36

Dated 1655.

10 **Jacob's Ladder** B. 36

Dated 1655. Superb impression of the second state of three.

11 **The Vision of Daniel** B. 36

Dated 1655. Very brilliant impression of the first state of three.

12 **The Triumph of Mordecai** B. 40

Assumed date 1640. Extremely fine impression of the only state.

"First dry-point, then finished with delicate biting; then strongly accented with dry-point. A delightful illustration of the story. Note the subtlety with which light and shadow are interchanged and yet kept broad, and how all the curves center in Mordecai's figure."

C. J. Holmes. *Notes on the Art of Rembrandt.*

13 **Tobit Blind** B. 42

Dated, 1651. First state of two. From the Fontaine Walker collection.

"*Jesus Disputing with the Doctors: The Larger Plate* is a masterly sketch like the *Tobit*, in which the imaginative conception of the scene far predominates over simple handicraft."

P. G. Hamerton.

14 **Annunciation to the Shepherds** B. 44

Dated, 1634. Third state of four. From the Brentano-Birckenstock collection.

"In 1634 Rembrandt had etched the large *Annunciation to the Shepherds*, in which the landscape is of the same visionary kind as appears in the paintings. The general effect is of white on black, the supernatural effulgence in the sky, which so startles the shepherds and their flocks, calling out of the gloom mysterious waving heights of foliage and obscure gleams of distance."

Laurence Binyon. *Prints and Their Makers*, page 96.

15 **The Nativity** B. 45

Brilliant impression of the first state of three. From the Hilgrove Coxe collection.

See introduction.

16 **The Adoration of the Shepherds** B. 46

Assumed date, 1652. Fine impression of the completed state, the planks behind the head of the Virgin are distinctly visible, but before the plate was reworked. *See introduction*

17 **Flight into Egypt (A Night Piece)** B. 53

Dated, 1651. Extremely fine impression of an intermediate state before the fourth and fifth, there are six states in all. From the Paul Mathey collection. *See introduction*

18 **Holy Family Crossing a Rill** B. 55

Dated, 1654. From the Artaria, Barden and Dr. Elischer collections.

"The Virgin, resting her hand on the saddle, hangs her head with an air of grief; the precaution of the old man who sounds the water with his staff is expressed in a most accomplished manner. The ass is a masterpiece of design and engraving. If this little print were rare, it would command enormous prices, so charming is it." *See introduction* Charles Blanc.

19 **Rest on the Flight into Egypt** B. 57

Dated, 1647. *See introduction*

20 **Rest on the Flight into Egypt** B. 58

Dated, 1645. Only state, on paper watermarked with the "Head of Folly." This plate was lightly etched and impressions are always faint. *See introduction*

21 **Christ Disputing With the Doctors** B. 65

Dated, 1652. First state before the plate was disfigured by foul biting at the top and right. Extremely fine impression, from the Richard Gutekunst collection.

"Magnificent: its simplicity should be compared with the studied arrangement of the 1630 plate, as its variety of individual characterization may be contrasted with the generalized types of the earlier piece. Cunning, pedantry, stupidity, senility, and fanaticism have never been more concisely presented."

C. J. Holmes. *Notes on the Art of Rembrandt.*

22 **Christ Preaching** B. 67

Assumed date, 1652. Beautiful proof on paper watermarked with the "Head of Folly." From the de Vries and Artaria collections.

"Though less important than the Hundred Guilder Print, the *Christ Preaching* is certainly as strong as, if not stronger than, its great companion in its drawing of human character. The profound attention of the assembly, the marvelous expressions of their faces as they listen to the words of Christ, make an impression upon us that cannot be forgotten, and we are as if we ourselves were there listening to what the great Preacher has to say." Atherton Curtis.

"His drawing makes itself overlooked, but overlooks nothing. He is excellently physiognomic. He expresses and characterizes in their individuality traits, looks, attitudes, and movements; that is to say, the normal habits and passing accidents of life. His execution has the propriety, the loftiness, the close tissue, the power and concision natural to craftsmen who are past masters in the art of fine language."

Eugène Fromentin. *Les Maîtres d'Autrefois.*

23 **Christ Driving Out the Money Changers** B. 69

Dated, 1635. Extremely fine clear impression of the first state of two.

24 **The Raising of Lazarus** B. 72
(The Smaller Plate)

Dated, 1642. First state of two.

"A definite landmark in Rembrandt's career; entirely perfect and successful. The figures, all done from memory, are at once complete in themselves and fused in the general scheme. The design is more daring in its conventions and omissions than any previous attempt. Everywhere character is rendered without caricature, and set in a delicate natural atmosphere.

25 **The Agony in the Garden** B. 75

Dated, 165 (?). From the collection of Pierre Mariette, 1670. *See introduction*

26 **The Crucifixion (Oval)** B. 79

Assumed date, 1648. Beautiful impression of the first state of two. Extremely rare.

27 **The Descent From the Cross by Torchlight** B. 83

Dated, 1654. Superb impression of the first state of two. From the Holford collection.

"I have an especial liking for this, the work is so right and manly and the composition so natural, and yet so full of art."

See introduction P. G. Hamerton.

28 **Christ Carried to the Tomb** B. 84

Assumed date, 1645. Beautiful impression from the Richard Gutekunst collection.

See introduction

29 **Christ at Emmaus** B. 87
(The Larger Plate)

Dated, 1654. First state of three. Superb impression. From the collection of the Earl of Spencer. On paper watermarked with a "Fleur de Lys."

"A number of masterly works in etching are dated 1654. About all there is the print doubly attractive on account of the charming simplicity of the design, which repeats with new artistic beauty the subject, which the master already so often handled, of the manifestation of *The Redeemer at Emmaus*."

Knackfuss. *Rembrandt*, page 128.

See introduction

30 **The Same** B. 87

Second state of three. From the Theodore Dewitt collection.

31 **Christ at Emmaus** B. 88
(The Smaller Plate)

Dated, 1864. Only state.

32 **The Incredulity of St. Thomas** B. 89

Dated, 1650. Superb proof of the only state, duplicate from the Berlin and Dresden Museums, also from the Theobold collection.

"The miraculous presence is at last perfectly suggested with the greatest possible economy of means. Force, character, and luminosity are attained without contrast or labor; indeed, in its treatment of light it is the most modern of Rembrandt's works."

C. J. Holmes. *Notes on the Art of Rembrandt.*

See introduction

33 **St. Jerome Writing at the Foot of a Tree** B. 103

Dated, 1648. Superb proof.

"Une des pièces les plus gracieuses de l'oeuvre."

Rovinski.

34 **St. Jerome in an Italian Landscape** B. 104

Assumed date, 1653. Superb impression, on paper watermarked with the "Head of Folly." From the James Rice collection.

"Rembrandt a traité bien des fois ce sujet de Saint Jérôme, mais jamais avec plus de grandeur ni d'une façon plus heureuse."

Charles Blanc. *Rembrandt.*

35 St. Jerome in Rembrandt's Dark Manner B. 105

Dated, 1642. Very fine proof of the second state of three.

36 Star of the Kings (A Night Piece) B. 113

Assumed date, 1652. Fine impression of the only state.

This represents a procession on Christmas Eve at Amsterdam, at which a symbolical star of Bethlehem was carried through the streets.

37 The Pancake Woman B. 124

Dated, 1635. Second state of three.

"What an abundance of spirit and humor there is in the delightful picture of street life, *The Pancake Woman!*"

Knackfuss.

38 The Synagogue B. 126

Dated, 1648. Superb impression of the second state of three.

"There is virtue in limitation of interest, and it is in this respect that the same style of etching used in the Hundred Guilder Print succeeds so perfectly in that wonderful little piece of genre, *The Jews in Synagogue.*"
A. M. Hind. *Rembrandt's Etchings.*

39 Peasant Family Traveling B. 131

Assumed date, 1652. Extremely fine impression of the first state of two. From the Paul Mathey collection.

40 Two Peasants Traveling B. 144

Assumed date, 1644. Extremely fine impression from the Kalle, Barden and Brentano-Birckenstock collections.

41 Beggars at the Door of a House B. 176

Dated, 1648. Beautiful impression of the first state of two.

"When Alphonse Legros remarked to me that he considered this to be Rembrandt's finest etching, I answered: 'That is because it is so like one of your own.' To this he made answer: 'You pay me an immense compliment.' "
Frederick Keppel. *The Golden Age of Engraving.*

42 **Nude Man Seated on a Bench** B. 193

Dated, 1646. The state differences sighted by Rovinski are not clear, and there would appear to be only one state of the plate. Brilliant and early impression. The right hand border of the curtain is drawn in with pen, this was probably done by Rembrandt as a suggestion for changes in the plate, which however were never carried out. From the D. Momas collection.

43 **A Woman Preparing to Dress After Bathing** B. 199

Dated, 1658. Superb impression on Japan paper. This proof comes from the Rovinski, collection, and is reproduced in Rovinski's catalogue on Rembrandt.

"Note the masterly arrangement and study of lighting for which this wonderful plate is the pretext. All details of structure are lost in the blaze of light which illuminates the piece, and the drawing once more is rightly not structural. This force and splendor, it should be noticed, are obtained without the help of dry-point."

C. J. Holmes. *Notes on the Art of Rembrandt.*

44 **Diana at the Bath** B. 201

There appears to be only one state. Brilliant early impression, on paper watermarked with an "Imperial Eagle." From the Earl of Aylesford, Duke of Buccleugh, and Hawkins collections.

45 **The Woman With the Arrow** B. 202

Dated, 1661. Extremely fine impression. Early state before the signature was strengthened.

This is among the rarest, as it is one of the most beautiful of Rembrandt's etchings of the nude.

46 **Landscape With a Sportsman** B. 211

Assumed date, 1650. Extremely rare first state of two. From the Galichon collection.

47 **Landscape With a Flock of Sheep** B. 224

Dated, 1650. Extremely fine impression, of the second state. From the collection of the Earl of Spencer.

Atherton Curtis considers this, and the *Six's Bridge*, to be the finest of Rembrandt's landscapes.

48 **Cottage With White Palings** B. 232

Dated, 1642. Beautiful impression. From the Artaria and Morrison collections.

This is one of the most charming of Rembrandt's landscapes. The vivid white of the planks in the center of the dark part of this picture is an instance of his brilliant originality of composition. The trees are beautiful examples of his earlier manner of treating foliage in pure etching. Later on, when he came to use dry-point more in the treatment of trees, in such plates as the *Goldweigher's Field* and the *Flock of Sheep*, the foliage is quite different and is made up of a great number of stiff little strokes.

49 **Renier Anslo** B. 271

Dated, 1641. Third state of five. From the C. D. Ginsburg collection.

50 **Jan Lutma** B. 276

Dated, 1656. Very fine impression of the second state of four. From the Richard Gutekunst collection.

"Rembrandt produced one of his most masterly portrait etchings in 1656, the incomparably picturesque and lifelike print of the famous goldsmith, Janus Lutma of Groningen."
H. Knackfuss. *Rembrandt*, page 137.

"He" (Rembrandt) "admired nothing so much as a certain stern and manly grandeur resulting from the combination of the habits of reflection and much experience of the world."
P. G. Hamerton.

51 **Portrait of Coppenol** B. 282
(The Smaller Plate)

Assumed date, 1636. Extremely fine impression. From the Pierre Mariette collection, 1670.

52 **Rembrandt Laughing** B. 316

Dated, 1630. Fourth state of five before slip drypoint strokes at the right.

53 **Rembrandt's Mother, With Hand to Breast** B. 349

Dated, 1631. Second state of five.

54 **Saskia and Five Other Heads** B. 365

Dated, 1636. Fine impression, on paper watermarked with the "Imperial Eagle." From the S. Barden and Graf Harrach collections.